

IN THE CLAIMS:

The status and content of each claim follows. *No amendments to the claims are proposed by the present paper.*

1-30. (canceled)

31. (previously presented) A method of generating an image comprising a position identifying pattern and content the method comprising the steps of:

defining criteria relating to a region where the content and the pattern are superimposed, the criteria determining whether the pattern will be distinguishable over the content when applied to a product;

identifying such a region in the image; and

selecting a characteristic of the pattern or the content in the region on the basis of the criteria, such that the image in the region meets the criteria.

32. (previously presented) A method according to claim 1 wherein the characteristic is a characteristic of the pattern.

33. (previously presented) A method according to claim 2 wherein the characteristic of the pattern within the region is selected depending on the density of the content within the region.

34. (previously presented) A method according to claim 3 wherein the pattern is made up of a plurality of pattern elements and the characteristic is the density of each of the pattern elements.
35. (previously presented) A method according to claim 4 wherein the density of each of the pattern elements is selected a high density and a low density.
36. (previously presented) A method according to claim 5 wherein the high density corresponds to the pattern elements being substantially covered with marking material, when the image is applied to a product.
37. (previously presented) A method according to claim 5 wherein the low density corresponds to the pattern elements being left substantially free of marking material, when the image is applied to a product.
38. (previously presented) A method according to claim 7 including defining a size of each of the pattern elements, the size depending on whether the pattern element is high density or low density.
39. (previously presented) A method according to claim 4 further comprising classifying the content within the region as high density or low density, and selecting the low pattern element density if the content is high density, and the high pattern element density if the content is low density.

40. (previously presented) A method according to claim 9 wherein the content within said region is classified as high, low or intermediate density, and the method further comprises modifying the content in the intermediate density content regions to make it higher or lower density thereby to maintain contrast between the content and the pattern in the intermediate density regions.

41. (previously presented) A method according to claim 1 wherein the characteristic is a characteristic of the content.

42. (previously presented) A method according to claim 11 wherein, the characteristic is the density of the content, which is limited to at least one predetermined range to maintain contrast between the content and the pattern within the region.

43. (previously presented) A method according to claim 1 wherein the image is applied to a product using a marking material, the marking material being the same for the pattern and the content.

44. (previously presented) A method according to claim 11 wherein the characteristic of the content is the nature of the marking material to be used when applying the content to a product.

45. (previously presented) A method according to claim 14 wherein the marking material is selected to be different from that selected for applying the pattern to the product.

46. (previously presented) A method according to claim 1 further comprising applying the image to a product.
47. (previously presented) A method according to claim 16 wherein the pattern and the content are applied to the product in a one-pass process.
48. (previously presented) A method according to claim 16 wherein the pattern and the content are applied to the product by a printer.
49. (previously presented) A data carrier carrying data arranged to control a computer system to perform the method according to claim 1.